

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Joint Committee on
Finance
(JC-Fi)

Sample:

- Record of Comm. Proceedings
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

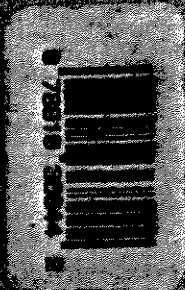
➤

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ 97hr_JC-Fi_Misc_pt02i_pt01_DPR

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤



Joint Finance

16.505/16.515

14 Day Passive
Reviews

10/17/96 to

12/17/96

DNR 10/24/96

STATE OF WISCONSIN

SENATE CHAIR
BRIAN BURKE

Room 302H
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
Phone: (608)266-8535



ASSEMBLY CHAIR
BEN BRANCEL

LL2, 119 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952
Phone: 608-266-7746

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

October 24, 1996

Secretary George Meyer
Department of Natural Resources
101 South Webster, 5th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Dear Secretary Meyer:

We received notice of two proposed purchases that exceed \$250,000 under the Stewardship program on October 4, 1996 (dated September 30, 1996). No objections have been raised to the proposed purchase from the Wrolstad Charitable Remainder Trust for the Natural Areas program in Waupaca County, and it is therefore approved. However, concerns have been raised relating to the approximately 20 miles of railroad right-of-way from Fox Valley & Western Ltd. in Portage and Waupaca Counties. Accordingly, a meeting will be scheduled to review this proposed purchase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian Burke".

BRIAN BURKE
Senate Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ben Brancel".

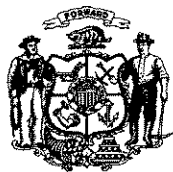
BEN BRANCEL
Assembly Chair

cc: Members, Joint Committee on Finance
Linda Nelson, Department of Administration

STATE OF WISCONSIN

SENATE CHAIR
BRIAN BURKE

Room 302H
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
Phone: (608)266-8535



ASSEMBLY CHAIR
BEN BRANCEL

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Madison, WI 53708-8952
Phone: 608-266-7746

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Representative Ben Brancel
Senator Brian Burke
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Finance

DATE: October 11, 1996

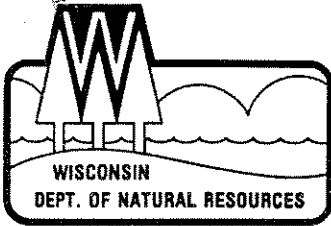
RE: 14-Day Passive Review

Attached is a copy of a request from the Department of Natural Resources regarding the notification of a land purchase from Fox Valley & Western, Ltd., in the amount of \$257,725. Pursuant to s.23.0915(4), stats., the Department is required to notify the Joint Committee on Finance of all Stewardship projects costing more than \$250,000. This request includes approximately 20 miles of railroad right-of-way. Approximately 16 miles in Portage County would be developed and maintained as a biking and recreation trail by the County and the remaining 4 miles in Waupaca County would be held by DNR for future sale of development.

While the DNR notice is dated September 30, the request was received in our offices on October 4. This request was included in the notice sent out on October 7, although it was not cited in the cover letter. Therefore, this request will be approved on October 24, 1996, unless you would like to meet formally to discuss it.

Please contact us if you need further information.

BB:BB:jc



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tommy G. Thompson, Governor
George E. Meyer, Secretary

Box 7921
101 South Webster Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921
TELEPHONE 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TDD 608-267-6897

September 30, 1996

IN REPLY REFER TO: P-1576

Honorable Brian Burke
Member State Senate
302 Hamilton
C A P I T O L

Honorable Ben Brancel
Member State Assembly
Room 107 South
C A P I T O L

Dear Senator *Brian* Burke and Representative *Ben* Brancel:

The Department is notifying you as co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance of a proposed 208.39-acre land purchase from Fox Valley & Western, Ltd., for \$257,725. This notice is pursuant to s. 23.0915(4), Stats., which requires the Department to notify the Joint Committee on Finance of all Stewardship projects more than \$250,000 in cost. The Natural Resources Board approved the purchase at the September meeting. The land is required for Public Recreational Trail Management for the Plover to Portage County Line State Trail. There are sufficient funds appropriated to complete the purchase.

The file number is P-1576 and the land is located in Portage and Waupaca Counties. Attached please find a memo and maps describing this transaction. The Department has notified local elected officials and state representatives regarding this transaction and I have not received any objections from them.

I certify that this request for consideration meets all applicable state and federal statutes, rules, regulations, and guidelines. This certification is based upon a thorough and complete analysis of this request.

If you do not notify the Department within 14 working days after this notification that the Committee has scheduled a meeting to review the proposed transaction, the Department will proceed with the approval process. If the Committee has no objections, the Department will forward the proposal to the Governor for his consideration. If you need additional information, please contact Carl Evert at 266-3462. Mr. Evert is available to answer any questions you may have in this matter.

Thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely,

George
George E. Meyer
Secretary

t:\lf9pl1576.slh

cc: Members, Joint Committee on Finance
Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Plover to Portage Co. Line Trail (19)
NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

6-B-9
Item No. _____

Form 1170-1
Rev. 5-91

SUBJECT: Approval to establish the Plover to Portage County Line State Trail, Portage and Waupaca Counties, including an acreage goal of 250 acres; and approval to purchase 205.45 (fee) and 2.94 (easement) acres from Fox Valley & Western, Ltd. for \$257,725.

FOR: SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Carl H. Evert

SUMMARY: The Department has obtained an option to purchase 205.45 (fee) & 2.94 (easement) acres of land from Fox Valley & Western, Ltd., for \$257,725 for the Plover to Portage County Line State Trail in Portage and Waupaca Counties. The item is being submitted because a new project needs to be established and because the purchase price exceeds \$150,000.

Portage County has agreed to develop and manage the 15.5 mile trail. The 4 miles of former railroad grade lying east of the county line in Waupaca County will be mothballed for rail banking or future trail use if that County has future interest in a trail.

An acreage goal of 250 acres is needed to accommodate the purchase as well as for trail heads and rest areas along the trail.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board establish the Plover to Portage County Line State Trail, approve the acreage goal of 250 acres, and approve the purchase of 205.45 (fee) & 2.94 (easement) acres of land for \$257,725.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Attached
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Attached
No <input type="checkbox"/>	Background Memo	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Attached

APPROVED:

CH Evert
Real Estate Director, Carl H. Evert - LF/4

9-16-96
Date

Howard S. Druckenmiller
Administrator, Howard S. Druckenmiller - AD/5

9/18/96
Date

George E. Meyer
Secretary, George E. Meyer - AD/5

9/19/96
Date

D. Weizenicker - PR/1
C. Evert - LF/4
J. Scullion - AD/5
D. Urso - Rhinelander

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: September 16, 1996

FILE REF: P-1576

TO: Governor Thompson

FROM: George E. Meyer *George*

SUBJECT: Proposed Land Acquisition, Fox Valley & Western, Ltd., Tract,
File # P-1576, Approval is Requested by November 15, 1996

1. PARCEL DESCRIPTION:

Plover to Portage County Line State Trail
Plover to Scandinavia Railroad Right-of-Way
Portage and Waupaca County

Grantor:

Fox Valley & Western, Ltd.
C/O Gene Timm
One O'Hare Centre
6250 North River Road - Suite 9000
Rosemont, IL 60018

Acres: 205.45 (fee) & 2.94 (easement)

Price: \$257,725

Appraised Value: \$207,150 and \$285,000

Interest: Purchase in fee.

Improvements: None

Location: The tract is located in Portage and Waupaca Counties.

Land Description: The land is level with 0-3% grade.

Covertypes Breakdown:

Type

Acreage

Cleared Rail Grade

208.39

Zoning: Subject is primarily a long strip of former railroad grade
about twenty miles long, mixed zoning similar to adjoining
lands

Present Use: Abandoned Railroad Grade (the west 2 miles are along an
operating line)

Proposed Use: Public Recreation and Scenic Protection

Tenure: 3 Years

Property Taxes: None (\$7,500 estimate)

Letter of Agreement Date: May 6, 1996

2. JUSTIFICATION:

The proposal is a fee and easement acquisition of a rail corridor owned by the Fox Valley and Western, Ltd., between Plover and Scandinavia. The acquisition will provide an excellent corridor for trail uses that may include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, ATV's, and cross-country skiing. Most of the property will be acquired under the "Rails to Trail" legislation. However, the westerly two miles (at Plover) consist of a 17-foot-wide strip of land along a rail line to provide the connection with the Green Circle Trail.

In the mid-1960's, Wisconsin pioneered a new national concept in outdoor recreation by acquiring abandoned railroad right-of-ways, such as the subject, and currently have about 900 miles of trail established statewide. The subject acquisition will be part of a plan to eventually connect several parts of Wisconsin by trail. Locally the acquisition has the potential to connect with the 24-mile Green Circle Trail located in the metropolitan area of Stevens Point/Whiting/Plover, two small communities (Arnott & Amherst Junction), and two Portage County parks. The Plover-Scandinavia area is located centrally in the State of Wisconsin. Within approximately a 150 mile radius are large population areas such as Milwaukee, Fox River Valley, Madison and Eau Claire.

If acquired, the Department proposes to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Portage County whereby they will develop, maintain, and operate the right-of-way as a trail. Portage County officials have been supportive of this proposal. However, the State does not plan to develop, or allow to be developed any trail, including snowmobile trail, on the Waupaca County portion. The four-mile section in Waupaca will be land-banked until such time is determined it is no longer needed; or it could be developed as a trail if Waupaca County endorsed and agreed to manage it. A feasibility study and environmental analysis has been prepared for the portion of the project located in Portage County and has been approved. The Department held a public meeting and addressed local concerns and there was some opposition expressed. However, subsequent written comments to the feasibility study and environmental analysis were in support of the proposed trail.

The MOA will require Portage County to draft a master plan for the trail corridor. Since the County is spending its money on development, maintenance, and operation of the trail, they will take the lead in preparation of a master plan which must be approved by the Natural Resources Board. With public input, the County will recommend various recreational uses of the trail that may include snowmobiling, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, ATV's, and motorized conveyance for people with disabilities.

Trail development likely to be recommended in the master plan consists of typical state trail projects like decking and railing bridges, crushed stone surfacing, and rest area development. Development of the corridor would be minimal.

Endangered resources occurring or that have been known to occur in or near the proposed trail corridor include several rare plant species (wild licorice, pale beardtongue, wooly milkweed) and the federally endangered Karner Blue butterfly. Surveys for prairie remnants and Karner blues are recommended prior to any rail abandonment actions that may disrupt the right-of-way.

Maintaining populations of prairie and barrens species may require periodic removal of brush and trees through controlled burns and/or mechanical brushing. Particular care will need to be taken with regards to the management needs of the Karner blue butterfly.

Police and fire protection would be provided by Portage County. If supplementary protection is needed, it should be limited, and therefore, should not cause an increase in local agency manpower and equipment needs.

The abandoned grade will provide a safe off-road trail for such activities as bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling, and other possible trail uses. Development would generate revenue for local contractors and local businesses should realize increased sales due to trail user purchases. Property taxes would be paid by the State to local government units.

Except for a 1915 railroad bridge over the Tomorrow River, it is unlikely any other cultural resources would be present within the 100-foot right-of-way due to construction of the railroad. However, State Historical Society records indicate the presence of several historic buildings and a number of Native American burial sites near the right-of-way. The largest grouping of burial sites is in the Lake Emily area.

This proposed state/county project will add 15.5 miles of recreational trail in central Wisconsin, most of which will be on an abandoned rail corridor. State acquisition dollars and hours of Department staff time will be committed to this project. The cumulative effect of this kind of acquisition would result in a high degree of resource protection. Present and future generations of citizens would be the primary beneficiaries. State ownership of the rail corridor would preserve it for future public needs, regardless as to whether the needs are of a recreation, utility, or transportation purpose.

3. FINANCING:

State Stewardship bond are anticipated:

Funds allotted to program:	Balance after proposed transaction:
\$1,400,000	\$1,106,000

4. ACQUISITION STATUS OF THE PLOVER TO PORTAGE COUNTY LINE STATE TRAIL:

Established: 1996
Acres Purchased to Date: 0 Acres
Acquisition Goal: 250 Acres
Percent Complete: 0%
Cost to Date: \$0

5. APPRAISAL:

Appraiser: Marvin L. Schmeiser (Staff Appraiser)
Valuation Date: July 18, 1995 and September 21, 1995
Appraised Value: \$207,150
Highest and Best Use: Assemblage with abutting ownerships

Allocation of Values:

- a. land: 208.39 acres @ \$994.05 per acre: \$207,150
- b. market data approach used, 7 comparable sales cited
- c. adjusted value range: \$860 to \$1,000 per acre in rural areas and \$3,500 to \$4,988 per acre in village areas

Appraisal Review: Rodney L. Bush - October 2, 1995

Comments: Mr. Schmeiser prepared three separate appraisal reports to value the property. The western 2 miles (along an operating line) was valued at \$12,900. The main (rail banking) position of 16.9 miles was valued at \$192,000. The last report covers easement strips at Amherst Junction and established a value of \$2,250. Mr. Schmeiser's total value was \$207,150. Mr. William Enright, a private appraiser, established two separate values of \$100,000 (for west 2 miles) and \$185,000 for the rest of the parcel. His total value was \$285,000. The final price of \$257,725 was based on the best price which could be negotiated.

RECOMMENDED:

C H Evert

Carl H. Evert

9-16-96

Date

Richard H. Hanger

Bureau of Legal Services

9/16/96

Date

Howard S. Druckenmiller

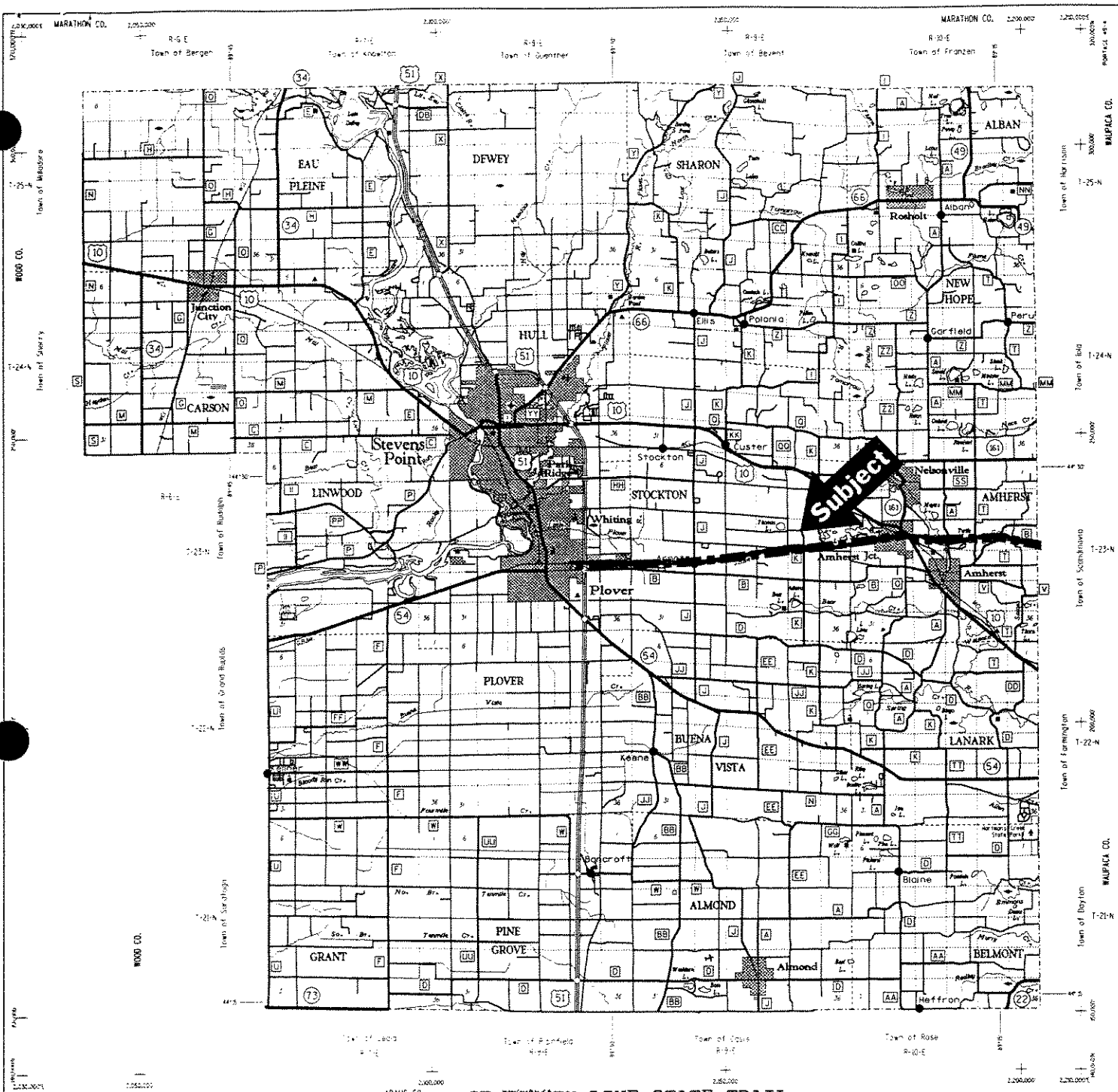
Howard S. Druckenmiller

9/18/96

Date

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FV&W PURCHASE - PLOVER TO PORTAGE COUNTY LINE STATE TRAIL

LEGEND

- Freehold
- U.S. or State Hwy
- County Trunk Hwy
- Town Road
- Private
- Water Divided
- Interchange
- Highway Separation
- Interchange Highway
- Water Divided
- State Highway
- County Highway Letter
- Right of Way
- State Boundary
- County Boundary
- Town Boundary
- Section Line
- Corporate Limits
- Nat'l. & State Forest Boundary

CIVIL TOWNS

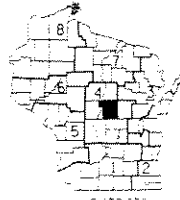
- Eau Claire
- DeWey
- Sharon
- Albn
- Carson
- Hull
- New Hope
- Linwood
- Stevens Point
- Stockton
- Amherst
- Plover
- Almond
- Pine Grove
- Grant
- Vista
- Belmont

TOWNSHIP NUMBERING

6	5	4	3	2	1
19	18	17	16	15	14
28	27	26	25	24	23
38	37	36	35	34	33
48	47	46	45	44	43

MILES OF HIGHWAY

STATE HIGHWAYS	65
COUNTY TRUNK	443
LOCAL ROADS	425
OTHER ROADS	4
TOTAL FOR COUNTY	937



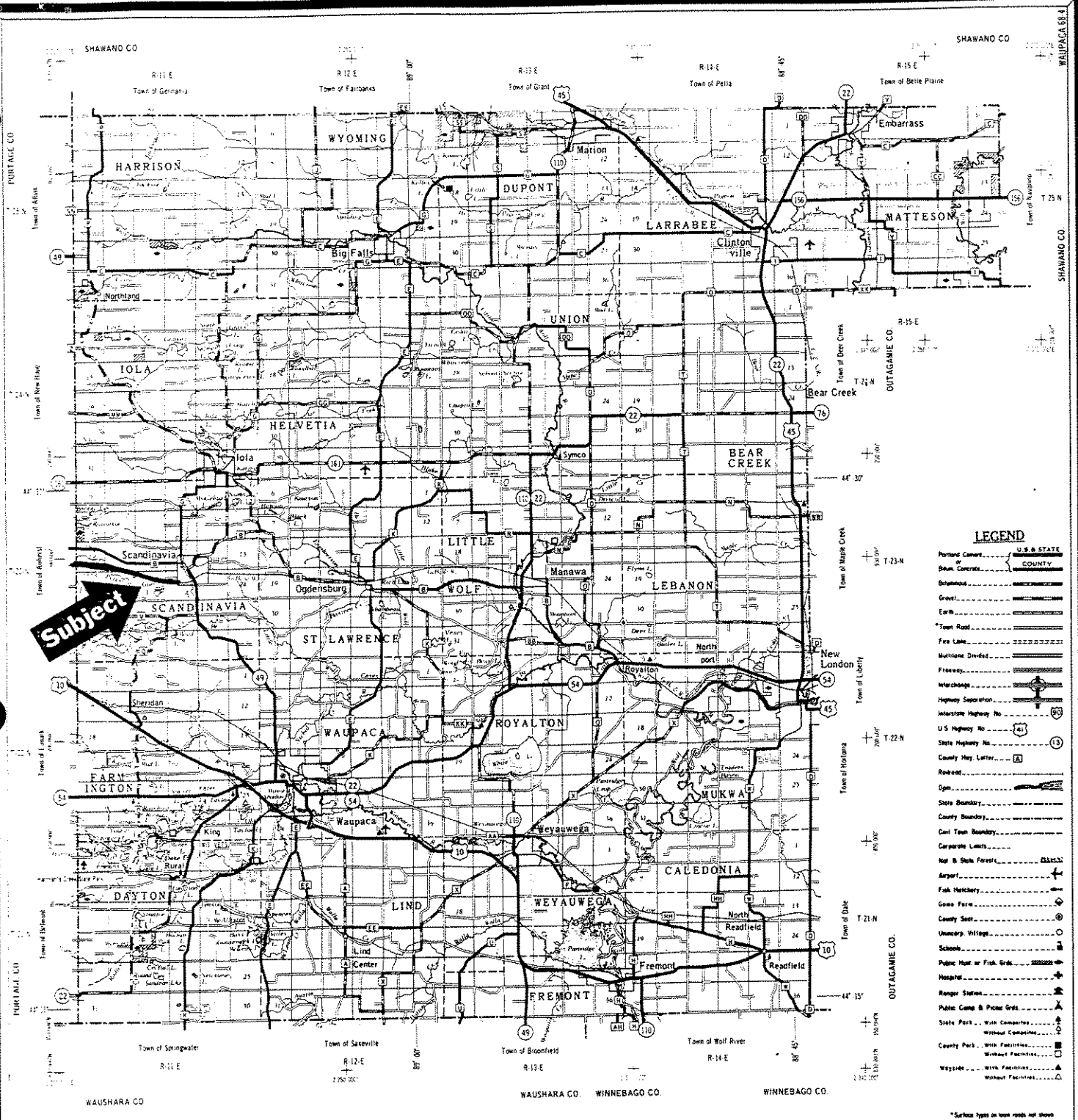
PORTAGE CO.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HILL FARM
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
WAUWATOSH, WISCONSIN

SCALE 0 1 2 MILES

Corrected for
JAN. 1990

Compiled from 1955 Aerial Photographs
Based on aerial photographs



FW&W PURCHASE (4 mile portion to be railbanked- not part of new project)

CIVIL TOWNS

HARRISON	WYOMING	DUPONT	LARRABEE	MATTESON
IOLA	HELVETIA	UNION	BEAR CREEK	
SCANDINAVIA	ST. LAWRENCE	LITTLE WOLF	LEBANON	
FARMINGTON	WAUPACA	ROYALTON	WEYAUWEGA	
DAYTON	LIND	WEYAUWEGA	CALEDONIA	
		FREMONT		

County Seat
Population
Area

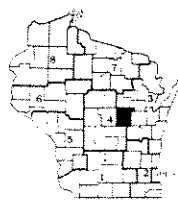
Records
37,264
751.56 sq. mi.

WILES OF HIGHWAY

STATE	28.04
COUNTY	10.17
LOCAL ROADS	1,220
OTHER ROADS	1,220
TOTAL FOR COUNTY	30,768

TOWNSHIP NUMBERS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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WAUPACA CO.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

STATE OFFICE BUILDING

Madison, Wisconsin

SCALE 0 1 2 MILES

Corrected for

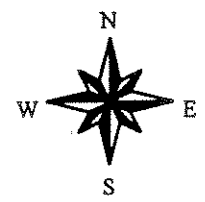
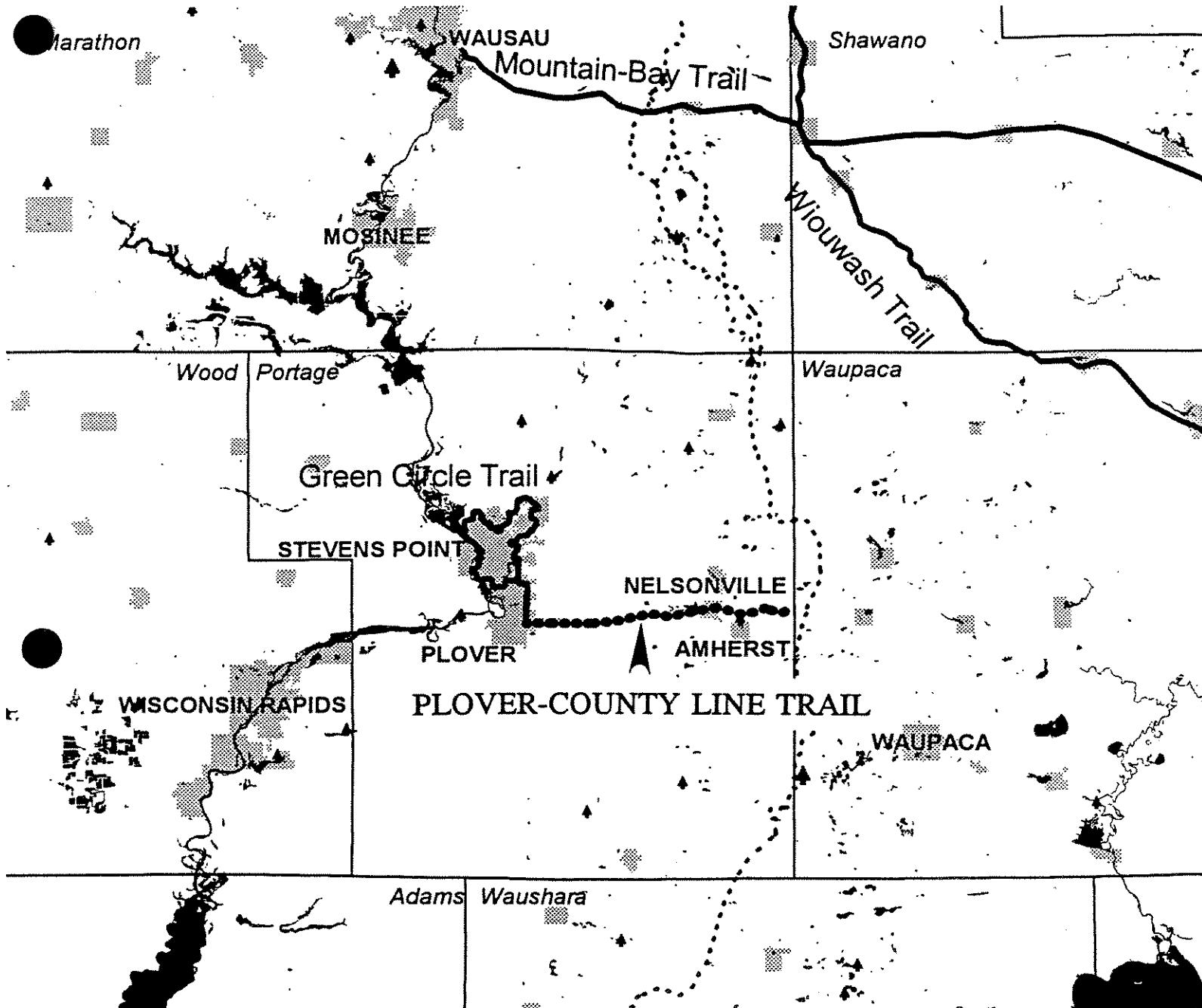
JAN. 1978

Compiled from U.S.C.S. Quadrangles

Based on Aerial Photographs

WAUPACA 58-4

Plover - County Line Trail



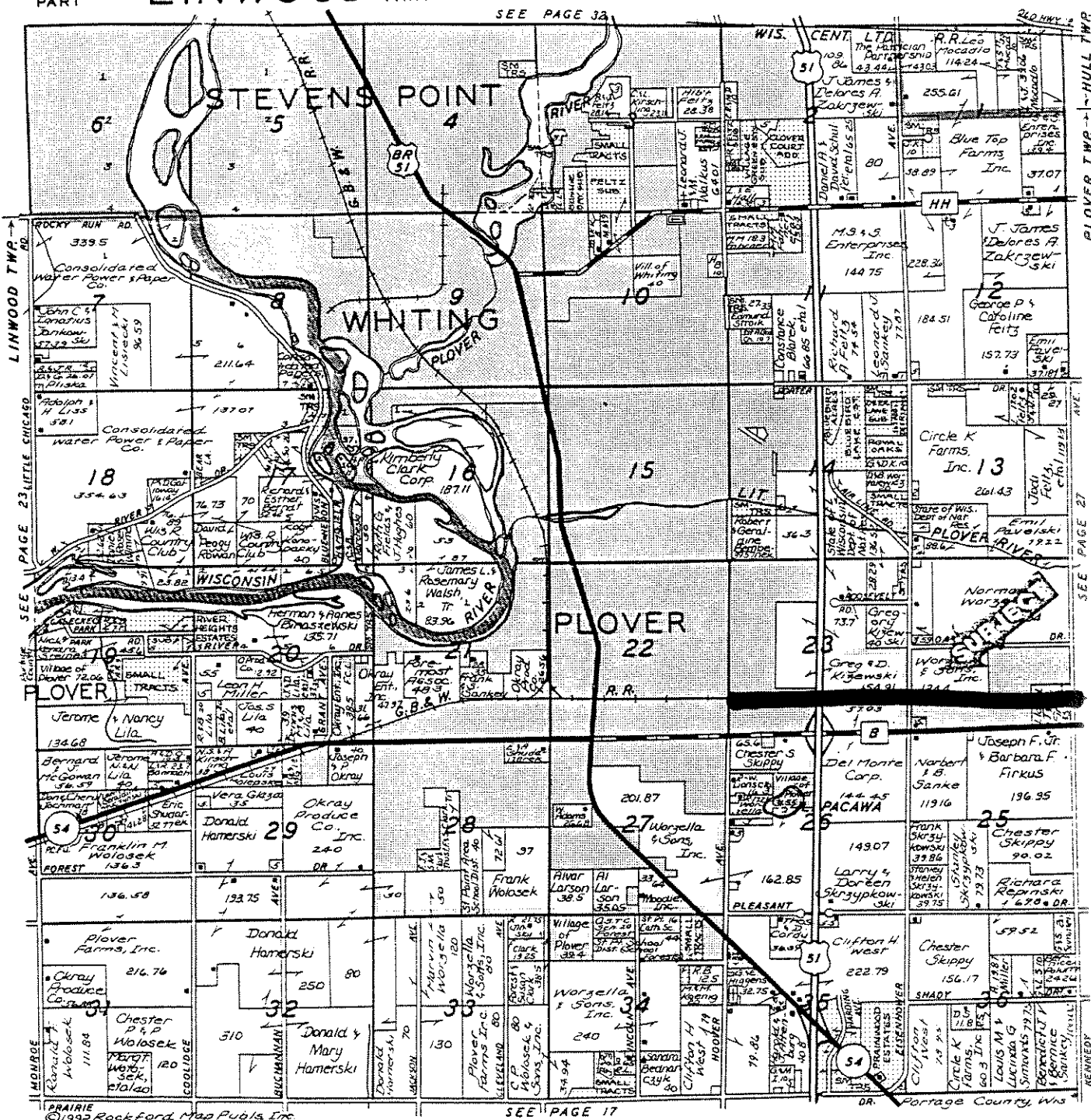
- Park
- State
 - County
 - PLOVER - COUNTY LINE TRAIL
 - State trail
 - Ice Age Trail
 - Lake or river
 - City or village
 - County

8

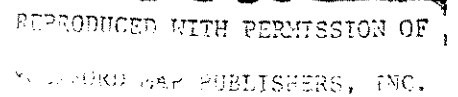
NORTHEAST
PART
SOUTHEAST
PART

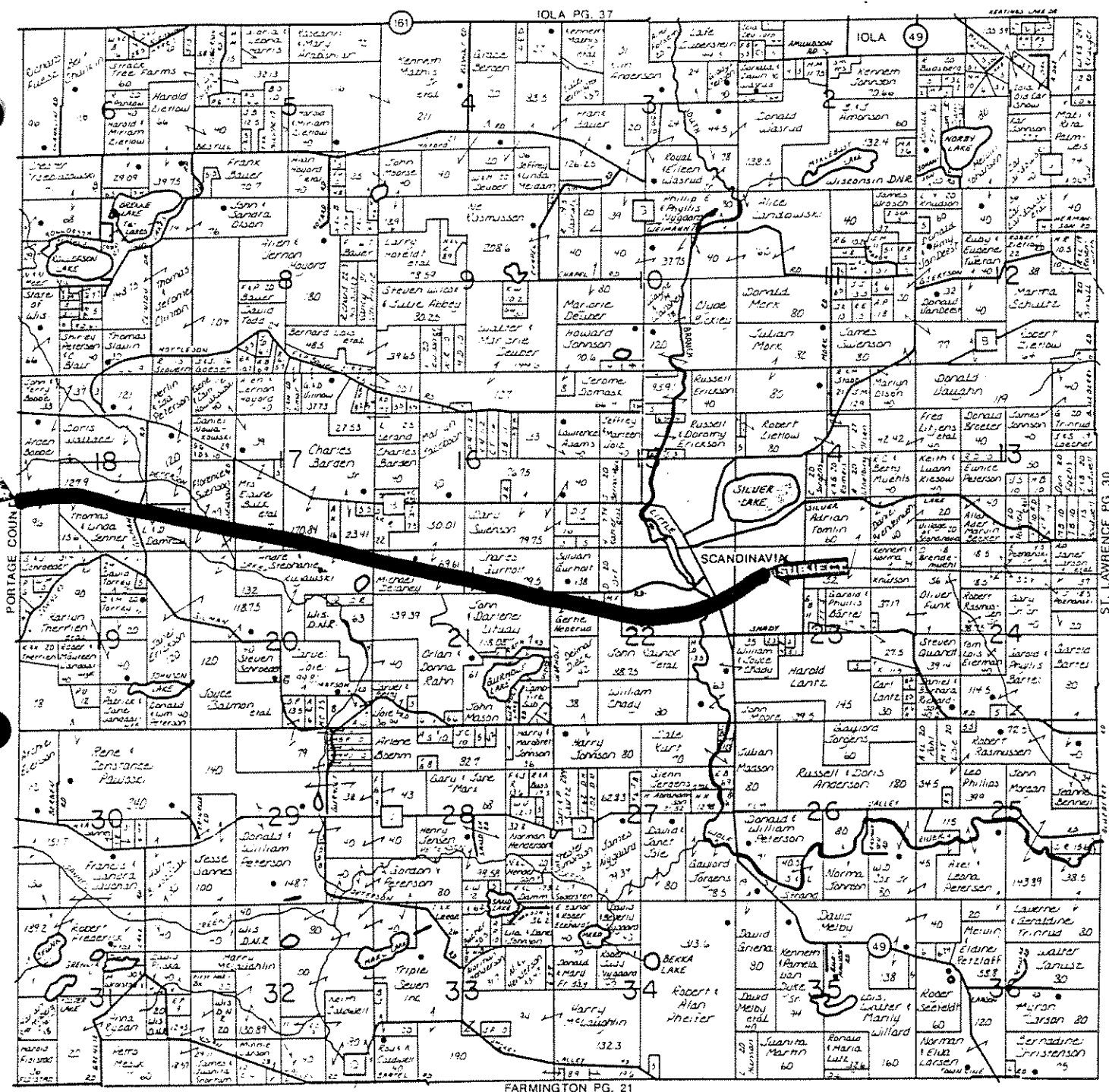
PLOVER
LINWOOD SOUTH HULL

T.23N.-R.8 E.



PRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF
ROCKFORD MAP PUBLISHERS, INC.





NEWS RELEASE

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 818, Rhinelander, WI 54501**

Phone: 715-365-8900 TDD: 715-365-8957

Fax: 715-365-8932

FOR RELEASE: July 11, 1996

**CONTACT: Lyle Hannahs, District Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor,
Marv Schmeiser, DNR Antigo Area Property Management Specialist**

SUBJECT: Portage/Waupaca County Line Rail Corridor Feasibility and Environmental Analysis

Rhinelander, Wis. -- The Department of Natural Resources has prepared a Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis for the proposed 15.7 mile Plover to Portage/Waupaca County line trail. The 15.7 mile proposed trail would be located entirely on an abandoned railroad right of way. The proposed trail would connect with the Green Circle Trail at Hoover Avenue in the Portage County community of Plover, and travel east to the Portage/Waupaca County line.

The Plover to Portage/Waupaca County line corridor will be designated as a state trail and administered either as a state park or state recreation area, depending on what is recommended in the master plan for the property.

The Department proposes to negotiate and enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Portage County whereby the county will develop, maintain and operate the right of way as a trail. By that agreement, the DNR will be responsible for providing the right of way for a continuous public recreation trail from Hoover Avenue in Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County line.

The 15.7 miles of abandoned rail right of way in Portage County would be obtained by the state under terms of "Rails to Trails" legislation and accomplished by fee simple purchase. An additional 1.2 miles of the corridor that extends from the Portage County line, east to the Village of Scandinavia in Waupaca County will be land banked by the Department of Natural Resources. Without approval by the Waupaca County Board, the DNR will not develop or allow other to develop any trail, including snowmobiles, on that portion.

The Department will also negotiate an easement, land use agreement, or fee simple purchase of a two mile connector strip on railroad right of way from Kennedy Avenue to Hoover Avenue to connect with the Green Circle Trail. This will provide a critical link under state Highway 51. Negotiations will also include a connector strip of .6 mile long in Amherst Junction to make the trail continuous to the Portage County-Waupaca County Line.

(More)

13

The MOA will require Portage County to draft a master plan for the trail corridor. With public input, the county will recommend various recreational uses of the trail that may include snowmobiling, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, ATV's and motorized conveyance for people with disabilities.

Public comments on this proposal are welcome and may be submitted in writing to the Department of Natural Resources. Comments regarding potential recreational uses of the trail may be directed to Mr. Lyle Hannahs, DNR North Central District Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor, 107 Sutliff Ave., Rhinelander, Wi. 54501, (715) 365-8946. Public comments regarding questions of land acquisition for the trail should be directed to Mr. Marv Schmeiser, DNR Antigo Area Property Management Specialist, P.O. Box 310, Antigo, Wi. 54409-0310, (715) 627-4317. Comments on this proposal should be received by Mr. Hannahs and Mr. Schmeiser by Friday, August 2, 1996.

Dave Daniels
Public Information Officer

Plover to Portage/Waupaca County Line Rail Corridor Feasibility Study/Environmental Analysis

NEEDS

In the mid-1960's, Wisconsin pioneered a new national concept in outdoor recreation by acquiring abandoned railroad rights-of-way and establishing the grades as state parks and recreation areas for public trail purposes. The trails are established under provisions of Chapter 27 of the Wisconsin Statutes that refers to state parks, or s. 23.091, Stats., that pertains to state recreation areas.

Abandoned railroad rights-of-way provide an excellent corridor for trail use and supply much needed recreational facilities for hiking, bicycling, horse back riding, snowmobiling, ATVs, and cross-country skiing. Public use of trails has exceeded Department expectations and bolstered area economies. Local governments are promoting the trails as an asset to their communities.

The proposed Plover to Portage/Waupaca County line trail has the potential to connect with the 24-mile Green Circle State Trail located in the metropolitan area of Stevens Point/Whiting/Plover (pop. 33,619), two smaller communities (Arnott, Amherst Junction), and two Portage County parks.

From the connection with the Green Circle Trail at Hoover Avenue in Plover, the 15.7 mile study corridor includes two miles of Fox Valley and Western railroad right-of-way eastward to Kennedy Avenue, and 13 miles of abandoned railroad from Kennedy to the Portage/Waupaca County line. The study also includes approximately 1/2 mile of active rail line right-of-way in Amherst Junction retained by Fox Valley and Western to serve F.S. Cooperative, the only shipper. The trestle over U.S. Highway 10 is used by the railroad to connect to Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad. Alternatives will be studied for providing a continuous trail from the Green Circle to the Portage/Waupaca County line.

The 1991-1996 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) lists hiking as a high priority activity and bicycling as a medium priority in the North Central District. Portage County is in the Department of Natural Resources' North Central Administrative District.

DESIGNATION

The Plover to Portage/Waupaca County line corridor will be designated as a state trail and administered either as a state park or state recreation area, depending on what is recommended in the master plan.

DESCRIPTION

The study corridor is located in central Wisconsin in Portage County. Primary road access is from U.S. Highways 51 and 10. There are at least 18 additional at-grade crossings, so access is also available from county trunk highways and town roads.

There is one water crossing over the Tomorrow River in Portage County. Some crossings over intermittent drainages may also exist. Fishing opportunities are available at Lake Emily (96 acres) in Portage County's Lake Emily park (143 acres), and at the Tomorrow River impoundment adjacent to the County's Cate park (8 acres). Lake Emily provides a 49 - site campground. Both parks are adjacent to the proposed trail. Standing Rock County Park is 1½ miles south of the study corridor and can be accessed via Tower Road.

Hartman Creek State Park, the nearest state park system property, is located about 10 miles south of the east end of the corridor. The Wiouwash State Trail is located about 24 miles from the east terminus.

About four miles of the corridor from Hoover Avenue east are adjacent to commercial property and irrigated agricultural land. Vegetation on this segment of corridor is primarily grasses with small amounts of hazelnut, wild plum, and saplings of black and bur oak.

East of the Village of Arnott the corridor enters scenic kettle moraine topography formed by the last Wisconsin glacier. Woodlands adjacent to the corridor become more common and greater numbers of black oak, bur oak, aspen, and box elder are established on the abandoned rail line right-of-way.

PROPOSED GOALS

To provide varied trail recreational uses for the public, and to conserve the resource for present and future generations.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT

The Department proposes to negotiate and enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (M.O.A.) with Portage County whereby they will develop, maintain, and operate the right-of-way as trail. By that agreement, the DNR will be responsible for providing the right-of-way for a continuous public recreational trail from Hoover Avenue in Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County line.

Under terms of "Rails-to-Trails" legislation, this would be accomplished by fee simple purchase of the entire 16.9-miles of abandoned rail corridor from Kennedy Avenue to the Village of Scandinavia in Waupaca County. The DNR will land bank the Waupaca County

portion. Without County Board approval, the DNR will not develop or allow others to develop any trail, including snowmobile, on that portion.

The Department has negotiated an easement and fee simple purchase of a two-mile connector strip on railroad right-of-way from Kennedy Avenue to Hoover Avenue to connect with the Green Circle State Trail. This will provide a critical trail link under U.S. Highway 51. Negotiations also included a connector strip .6 mile long in Amherst Junction to make the trail continuous to the Portage/Waupaca County line.

The DNR will also attempt to acquire about 7 acres on the Plover end near the intersection of Twin Towers Road and Waterway Road, and about 5 acres in Amherst Junction for trail parking areas.

The MOA will require Portage County to draft a master plan for the trail corridor. Since the county is spending its money on development, maintenance, and operation of the trail, they will take the lead in preparation of a master plan which must be approved by the Natural Resources Board. With public input, the county will recommend various recreational uses of the trail that may include snowmobiling, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, ATVs, and motorized conveyance for people with disabilities.

The Department will also suggest that a trail advisory committee made up of two or three members from the county plus representation from the Department of Natural Resources be established. The committee's responsibilities would include:

1. Maintaining liaison with all state and local governmental agencies.
2. Recommending priorities on developmental projects.
3. Considering any business aspects of the trail such as concession services for the public.
4. Recommending any changes to the MOA on an ongoing basis.
5. Coordinating trail activities among communities affected by the trail.
6. Raising funds for the trail.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE DNR

A. Land For Proposed Plover To County Line Trail

1. Abandoned rail corridor and connector strips	\$257,700
2. Two parking areas (approx. 12 acres)	90,000
Total estimated cost	\$347,700

There are no improvements.

* Includes the purchase from the Portage County line to Scandinavia.

B. Property Taxes

Village of Plover - \$30.02 mill rate x 88.6 =	\$2,660
Town of Plover - \$22.49 (average mill rate) x 25.8 =	580
Town of Stockton - \$20.45 (average mill rate) x 103.1 =	2,108
Town of Amherst - \$27.93 (average mill rate) x 130.3 =	3,640

C. Development

As a cooperative trail, Portage County would be responsible for development, although they would be eligible to apply for Department grants for trail development. Grants may also be available from the ISTEA program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

D. Operations

Portage county would also operate and maintain the trail by agreement. If snowmobiling or ATVs are allowed, funding from the Department's Snowmobile and ATV Program may be available to pay costs for grooming and some maintenance, such as bridge railing repair and brushing. Funds from this program may also be available for development. The County can also utilize "friends" groups that provide volunteer labor for routine maintenance.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The environmental impacts associated with acquisition of the abandoned rail corridor and providing connectors through fee simple purchase, easement or long-term land use agreements to create a continuous publicly owned trail from Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County line, will be minimal.

Trail development likely to be recommended in the master plan consists of typical state trail projects like decking and railing bridges, crushed stone surfacing, and rest area development. Development of the corridor would be minimal.

Some increase in vehicular traffic into and through the area will add noise and potential air pollution, although it is not expected to significantly affect Wisconsin's air quality. Increased traffic would increase energy use. Providing alternative non-motorized transportation opportunities such as walking and biking, may, however, off-set increased energy use and potential air pollution. Short-term trail construction would cause some local noise and air pollution. Development of the trail would have a negligible effect on existing drainage.

The existing vegetation would be managed to control weeds and promote woody growth for wildlife habitat, with some control to maintain scenic vistas. Human use of the trail may be somewhat detrimental to the behavior pattern of some wildlife.

Endangered resources occurring or that have been known to occur in or near the proposed trail corridor includes several rare plant species (wild licorice, pale beardtongue, woolly milkweed) and the federally endangered Karner Blue butterfly. Surveys for prairie remnants and Karner Blues are recommended.

Maintaining populations of prairie and barrens species may require periodic removal of brush and trees through controlled burns and/or mechanical brushing. Particular care will need to be taken with regards to the management needs of the Karner Blue butterfly.

Police and fire protection would be provided by Portage County. If supplementary protection is needed, it should be limited, and therefore, should not cause an increase in local agency manpower and equipment needs.

The abandoned grade will provide a safe off-road trail for the types of trail uses indicated in the Master Plan to be prepared by Portage County. Development would generate revenue for local contractors and local businesses should realize increased sales due to trail user purchases. Property taxes would be paid by the State to local government units.

Except for a 1915 railroad bridge over the Tomorrow River, it is unlikely any other cultural resources would be present within the 100-foot right-of-way due to construction of the railroad. However, State Historical Society records indicate the presence of several historic buildings and a number of Native American burial sites near the right-of-way. The largest grouping of burial sites is in the Lake Emily area.

Any lands purchased outside the right-of-way may require an archeological survey.

The railroad company will likely salvage many of the railroad ties on the abandoned right-of-way. For those that are not salvageable, there are two alternatives for proper disposal. One alternative is chipping the ties and using them for fuel at power plants. The other is obtaining a one-time disposal permit from DNR for burial of the ties, as outlined in NR 500.

It is not known if easements for utilities or other purposes exist on the right-of-way.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CUMULATIVE EFFECT

This proposed state/county project will add 15.7 miles of recreational trail in central Wisconsin, most of which will be on an abandoned rail corridor. State acquisition dollars and hours of Department staff time will be committed to this project.

The cumulative effect of this kind of acquisition would result in a high degree of resource protection. Present and future generations of citizens would be the primary beneficiaries.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RISK

State ownership of the rail corridor would preserve it for future public needs, regardless as to whether the needs are of a recreation, utility, or transportation purpose. There is minimal risk. Once the corridor is sold to individual buyers, the opportunity is lost forever to preserve it for future options.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRECEDENT

The establishment of the 15.7 mile corridor from Plover to the Portage/Waupaca county line as a state trail will not set a precedent. Nor will negotiating an agreement with Portage County whereby the state will purchase the right-of-way and the county will develop, maintain, and operate the trail. Since 1965, the DNR has purchased 22 abandoned rail corridors totaling about 694 miles. Of those, 9 are cooperative trails totaling 314 miles.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTROVERSY OVER ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Controversy could arise if some adjoining land owners object to using the corridor for developing a state trail. However, to the general public this project would not likely be controversial because of the popularity of state trails.

Adjacent land owners raised issues relating to aerial crop spraying, fencing, drive way easements and farm crossings. According to State Statute AG. 29.15, pesticides must be properly applied to protect against overspray or significant drift in any situation. For fencing, Portage County's current policy would apply, where by, they would assess the need for fencing relating to livestock and share in the cost of needed fences with the adjacent land owners. Existing easements for road crossings and driveways would be honored and requests for farm crossings for agricultural purposes would also be granted after review by the County and DNR. Farm crossings would be in the form of a renewable land use agreement and be perpendicular to the grade.

In some areas, access to farm fields is taking place. These would be reviewed on a case by case and land use permits would be considered where agreements do not now exist.

A public informational meeting was held by Portage County in Amherst Junction. With written comments solicited by the County, the majority of citizens are in support of the trail proposal. However, as is typical of most new rail-to-trail proposals, some of the adjacent landowners registered their opposition to the project. In accordance with the MOA, formal meetings will be held with municipal officials, legislators, and interest groups as part of the County's master plan process for the trail.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMENDATION

A. No change - Status Quo

Under this alternative, the corridor would not be converted into a public recreational trail. It is likely the corridor would be placed in private ownership, either in total or separate parcels. Development could occur which may degrade the resource. The corridor would no longer be available for future rail service, if the need should arise.

B. State Trail Owned, Developed, Maintained, and Operated by the Department of Natural Resources.

The Department would own the trail corridor and develop, maintain, and operate it as a state trail assuming funds for operation were available or could be budgeted for. Such action would assure the retention of the resource for recreation purposes. Depending on the availability of funds, the trail could be surfaced and the bridges planked and railed. Parking areas, toilets and drinking water would be provided at the terminus and rest areas. Where possible, local facilities would be utilized if made available. Department policy has been to not operate new railroad grade trails for operational funding reasons.

C. Cooperative State Trail Project

The DNR would negotiate an agreement with Portage County whereby the Department would purchase or negotiate a land use agreement for a continuous trail corridor from Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County line and the County would develop, maintain, and operate the trail. The trail would become a cooperative State/County project. This alternative reflects Department policy.

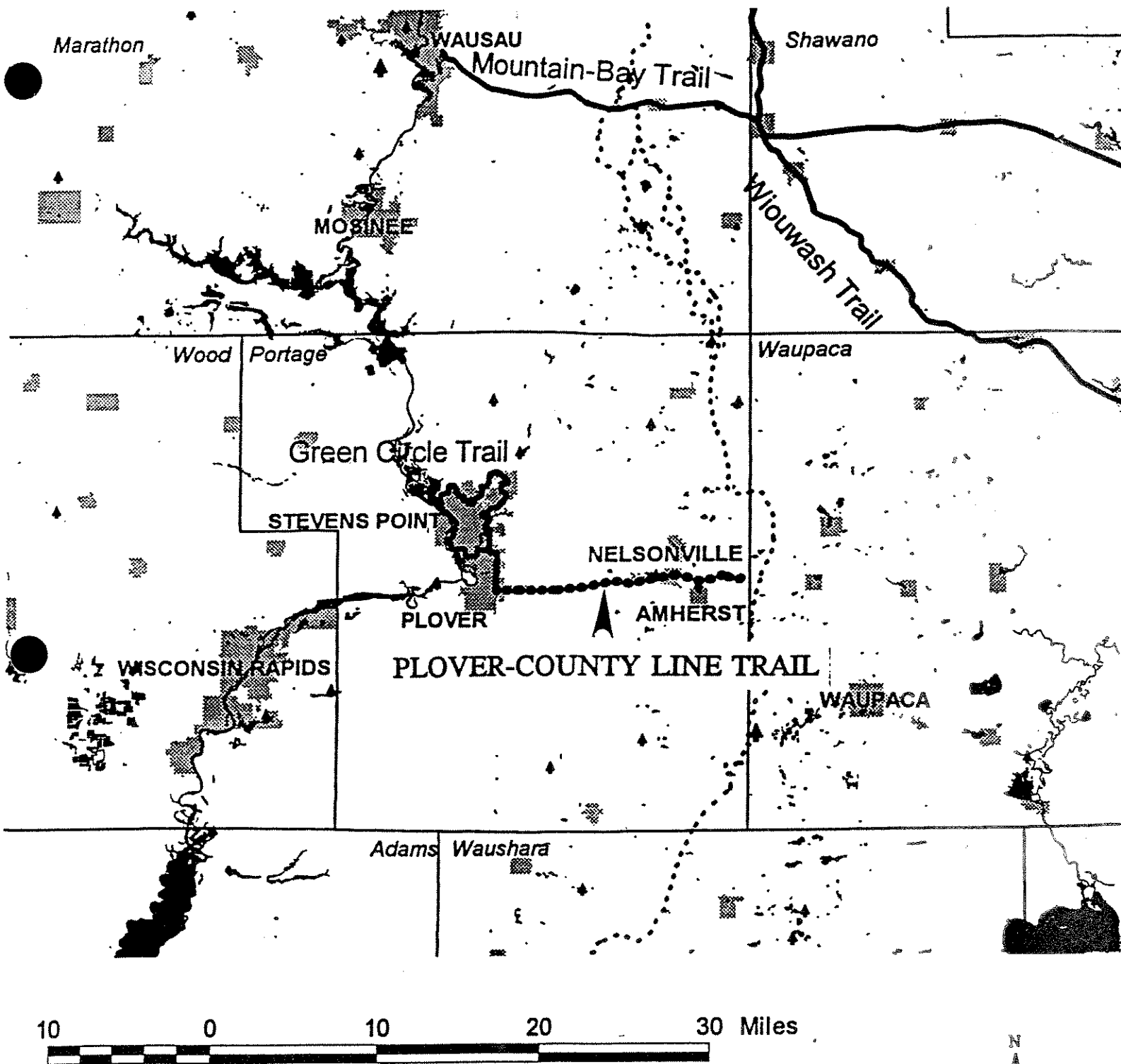
D. Final Recommendation

It is recommended that the trail become a cooperative state trail project.

DJK:si

v:\9606\pr9study.djk

Plover - County Line Trail



- Park
- ▲ State
 - ▲ County
 - PLOVER - COUNTY LINE TRAIL
 - State trail
 - Ice Age Trail
 - Lake or river
 - City or village
 - County

22

January 1996

DECISION (This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate authority)

In accordance with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code, the Department is authorized and required to determine whether it has complied with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code.

- A. EIS Process Not Required [X]

Analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department on this project.

- B. Major Action Requiring the Full EIS Process. []

The proposal is of such magnitude and complexity with such considerable and important impacts on the quality of the human environment that it constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Signature of Evaluator

Date Signed

Noted: Area Director or Bureau Director

Date Signed

Copy of news release or other notice attached? [X] Yes [] No

Number of responses to public notice 10

Public response log attached? [X] Yes [] No

James Grofman 8/26/96
CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WEPA
District Director or Director of BEAR (or designee)

District Director or Director of BEAR (or designee) Date Signed

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

If you believe that you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin statutes and administrative rules establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed.

For judicial review of a decision pursuant to sections 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed, or otherwise served by the Department, to file your petition with the appropriate circuit court and serve the

petition on the Department. Such a petition for judicial review shall name the Department of Natural Resources as the respondent.

To request a contested case hearing pursuant to section 227.42, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed, or otherwise served by the Department, to serve a petition for hearing on the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The filing of a request for a contested case hearing is not a prerequisite for judicial review and does not extend the 30-day period for filing a petition for judicial review.

Note: Not all Department decisions respecting environmental impact, such as those involving solid waste or hazardous waste facilities under sections 144.43 to 144.47 and 144.60 to 144.74, Stats., are subject to the contested case hearing provisions of section 227.42, Stats.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 227.48(2), Stats.

review and does not extend the 30-day period for filing a petition for judicial review.

Note: Not all Department decisions respecting environmental impact, such as those involving solid waste or hazardous waste facilities under sections 144.43 to 144.47 and 144.60 to 144.74, Stats., are subject to the contested case hearing provisions of section 227.42, Stats.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 227.48(2), Stats.

MARK GERLACH
MARSHA LUBINSKI
N4298 OAKLAND DR.
WAUPACA, WI 54981

DEAR MR. HANNAHS,

WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY BACK THE PROPOSED REC TRAIL FROM PLOVER TO THE WAUPACA COUNTY LINE.

AFTER THE HOURS OF ENJOYMENT WE HAVE HAD ON MANY OF THE STATES FINE TRAILS WE ARE REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ONE BEING LOCATED ~~CLOSE TO HOME.~~

WE WOULD URGE YOU TO DESIGNATE THIS TRAIL FOR NON-MOTORIZED USE. WE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO MOTORIZED CONVEYANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. HOWEVER, SNOWMOBILERS ALREADY HAVE A GOOD TRAIL SYSTEM IN PLACE IN THIS AREA & ATV USERS ALSO HAVE PLENTY OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IF WE WERE AN ADJACENT LAND OWNER TO SUCH A TRAIL, WE WOULD OBJECT TO THE NOISE & POLLUTION CAUSED BY MOTORIZED VEHICLES. THERE IS NOTHING MORE ANNOYING THAN BEING IN THE MIDDLE OF IS SEEMINGLY A QUIET WILDERNESS AREA ONLY TO HAVE THAT SILENCE BROKEN BY THE NOISE OF A SNOWMOBILE OR ATV.



IN SHORT, WE WOULD URGE YOU TO
PLEASE CONSIDER OPENING THE TRAIL
TO NON-MOTORIZED USE ONLY.
THANK-YOU FOR YOUR TIME

SINCERELY,

Mark W. Gerlach

MARK W. GERLACH

Marsha Lubinski

MARSHA LUBINSKI

DATE: July 29, 1996

TO: Lyle Hannahs
Dan Schuller

FROM: Pat Zatopa *PZ*

SUBJECT: Plover to Waupaca Co. Line Trail (PLOPACA, WAUPOVER Trail)

Mark Arentsen, Vil. of Plover Administrator, offered an suggestion for an alternative trailhead at the Plover end. DNR's plan was to purchase a parcel at Twin Towers Road (Industrial Park) for parking, toilets, etc.

Plover/Whiting Youth Athletics is developing a ballfield and toilet building on a site about 1,500 ft. west of Hoover Ave., adjacent to RR tracks and the existing Village ballfield/parking lot complex. The land is owned in parts by the Village and the youth group. According to Mark, everything (land and facilities) will be turned over the Village next year. He thought this facility could serve as a trailhead rather than investing in additional land and facility development.

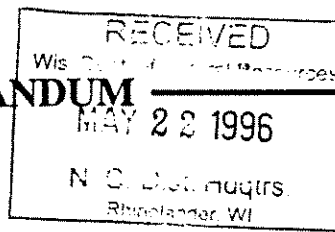
Mark has not discussed this with the Village Board or the youth group yet. He was merely advising me of the possibility before the DNR goes ahead with the land acquisition.

Of course, we would have to bring Portage County into the discussion, but I can't see why they'd object. We would also need to discuss negotiating an easement or land purchase from the railroad for the additional 1,500 ft. The adjoining landowner also has additional acreage he might offer for sale if the trail would require additional parking area.

Please keep this in mind before taking the next step.

*Could be considered as an alternative if Portage Co. agrees.
Lyle*

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM



State of Wisconsin

Date: May 21, 1996
To: Jim Grafelman
From: Marvin L. Schmeiser *msl*
Subject: Plover to Portage/Waupaca County Rail Corridor - Comments on Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis

File Code:

After reading the report I do not have any comments to add.

A few days ago I asked if you knew of any environmental concerns on the grade and that you could ask Green Bay if they knew of any in Waupaca Co. I needed the information for the option package. I will assume you do not have any major concerns; I have submitted the option package for Madison to work from in getting the proposed acquisition approved.

19/96.

I got a call for DOT w/ Rapids (Tom Hartiger?) regarding the bridge across Hwy 49 in Scandinavia. There are problems with clearance etc so DOT would like it to be removed. I discussed the plan to hold the grade but not develop. I suggested to call Lyle as project manager.

415 Oak Road
Custer, WI 54423
July 12, 1996

Marv Schmeiser
DNR Antigo Office
Box 310
Antigo, WI 54409-0310

Dear Mr. Schmeiser,

I am writing to express support for the creation of a recreational trail in Portage county. My family has used state bicycle trails for many years and we value them very much. The Green Circle Trail has been a great asset to our community and I think being able to access the rail trail from that is a great idea.

I have attended several of the planning and information meetings that have related to this trail and I realize there has been opposition from local landowners. I think alot of the anxieties expressed seem ill founded and and some of it is irrational. The many years of experience with other trails in Wisconsin and elsewhere support the reality that agriculture and trail use can coexist. The great majority of people who make the effort to venture out into rural areas on trails are very respectful of adjoining property.

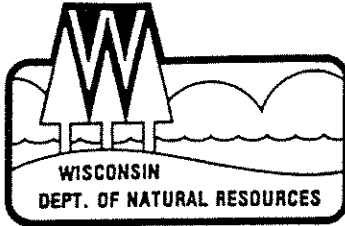
Another issue related to this trail acquisition is the preservation of right-of-ways between communities. It would be very short sighted of our society if these are not preserved.

I live near the trail area and am familiar with the local land features. The eastern three quarters of the trail traverses through very beautiful terminal moraine topography and will become a very popular trail. I am personally in favor of of the trail becoming a bicycle/walking trail, with the option for skate and diagonal skiing in the winter. I feel this would have less noise impact on landowners immediately along the trail than snowmobiling. I understand that some trails in Minnesota have parallel

horse paths to the side of the main path, perhaps that can be considered along portions of the trail though some of the hill cuts presently do not allow much extra room and bridges would be a problem.

Sincerely,


Jim Zach



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tommy G. Thompson, Governor
George E. Meyer, Secretary
Dale T. Urso, District Director

Antigo Area Office
1635 Neva Road, PO Box 310
Antigo, WI 54409-0310
TELEPHONE 715-627-4317
FAX 715-623-6773

July 18, 1996

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Peter Burrows
2408 Lamp Lighter Lane
Waupaca, WI 54981

Dear Mr. Burrows:

Enclosed is a copy of the Feasibility Study/Environmental Analysis you asked to have sent. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to call.

Sincerely,
North Central District

Marvin L. Schmeiser
Marvin L. Schmeiser
Area Land Agent

This individual called regarding the waupaca portion. By the questions asked it was apparent he was not in favor of the purchase. He referred to Rails to Trails in Indiana and that in the last month the process was being challenged.

RIVER RIDGE TRAIL

WAUPACA WI

Phone 715-258-3642
Fax 715-258-8488

July 16, 1996

Marv Schmeiser
DNR Antigo Area Property Management Specialist
PO Box 310
Antigo, WI 54409-0310

Dear Mr. Schmeiser,

I just heard of the DNR's decision to purchase the GBW/Wis Central RR right of way in Portage and Waupaca County. This is great news and will ensure that the Rails to Trails project will proceed at some time in the future. We are looking forward to the day we can use this wonderful trail in this beautiful part of the State.

Thank you for your foresight and initiative. You will be getting pressure from the local property owner because they would like this land for themselves. However we strongly feel it is for the good of the vast majority that this land remain available to the public.

Sincerely,

Conrad D Helbach

209 E Lake St
Waupaca, WI 54981
715-258-3542



ICE AGE PARK & TRAIL FOUNDATION, INC.

Mike Kirk, Waupaca Co. Coordinator 334 Granite St. Waupaca, WI.
715/258-2295

July 19, 1996

Marv Schmeister
DNR Antigo Area Property Management Specialist

Dear Mr. Schmeister,

I recently read in the Waupaca County Post about the DNR's decision to purchase the Scandinavia-Plover rail corridor. As a citizen of Waupaca County, Ice Age Trail Coordinator and member of the Soo Line Historical & Technical Society, I wish to thank you for this decision. I appreciate the fact that you recognize the importance of purchasing rail corridors as they are abandoned, not only for their immediate recreational use, but, also for the preservation of valuable transportation corridors for the future. If these lines are broken up, they would be very difficult to reconstruct.

Thanks again for this decision!

Sincerely,

Mike Kirk

C.C. Waupaca County Parks & Rec. Dept.

July 18, 1996

Lyle Hannahs
DNR North Central District Parks and Recreation
107 Sutliff Avenue
Rhineland WI 54501

Dear Mr. Hannahs,

We wish to provide input into the possible trail uses of the Portage / Waupaca County line trail. The past several years have seen a great interest in outdoor sports in the area. I think we could all agree that this is a wonderful thing. Personally, we choose to participate in silent (non-motorized) sports and find many folks with the same interests here. We also encourage our children to pursue these less costly, more physically challenging, and environmentally friendly endeavors as much as possible.

Living in the more rural communities, it is difficult to find safe routes to pursue these silent sports, especially for children. It is our hope that this trail line could become popular for just this reason. The prospect of not having to compete with cars, semis, and tractors, etc. would put many enthusiast's minds at ease and surely increase the level of activity on the trails.

From past experiences, we would also state that motorized and silent sports do not belong on the same trails. It is simply too dangerous and the regular damage to the trails from motorized vehicles increases maintenance costs. There are many nice snowmobile / ATV trails in this area. Please consider creating a haven connecting the two counties for silent sports in this area.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mark Kryshak and Jodi Engum Kryshak
231 Mill Street
Amherst WI 54406

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION phone 715-421-8323

TOM HARDINGER

DIST BRIDGE MAINT ENG.

1691 2nd Ave South PO Box 8021

WIN RAPID, WI 54495

Scandinavia - Highway 49 RR Bridge crossing over Highway 49

1. Traffic Safety Hazard according to Tom H. C DOT)
2. Not enough vertical or horizontal clearance and is safety ~~problem~~ problem for vehicular traffic
3. Concrete abutments & slab span (Concrete structure)
DOT would pay costs of removal \$30,000
and replacement with a trail bridge in the future
4. Stay in contact with liaison in Western Region for Trail in known
5. Long term plan now showing DOT would not in it
needed.

Consent received 7-17-96

Lyle O. Hansen